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U of M Crookston Instructor Christo Robberts Travels to The Hague, Netherlands for Meeting on Sustainability of the Agri-food Chain

By Elizabeth Tollefson, Christo Robberts on Friday, November 17, 2006

CROOKSTON, MN (November 17, 2006) – University of Minnesota, Crookston (UMC) Manufacturing Management Instructor Christo Robberts participated in the 2006 European Federation of Food Science and Technology (EFFoST) Annual Meeting earlier this month to learn more about the sustainability of the agri-food chain. Robberts attended the annual meeting in The Hague, Netherlands, along with other delegates from Europe, Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, North and South America and the Middle East.

Noted speakers from the European community, the Swedish Institute for Food and Biotechnology and various research institutes and industries addressed sustainability issues brought forth by the delegates. “The blend of government, regulatory bodies and industry made for lively discussion,” Robberts said. “Everyone recognizes that as we look to the future, there is only one way to proceed, and that is to limit waste and optimize energy conversion.”

Speaking at the conference, Renee Bergkamp, director-general at the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality in the Netherlands, explained some of the aggressive programs currently used to ensure waste management to maximize benefit in the Netherlands. “We are not heirs of the land but merely the keepers of it for our great grandchildren,” she said.

Workshops allowed delegates to discuss presented work with the authors in attendance. One of sessions examined the use of sugar beets as fermentation feed, a topic relevant to northwestern Minnesota and research on the Crookston campus and at the Northwest Research and Outreach. Robberts also attended sessions on whole material exploitation, technology development, tools for sustainability and sustainability in the future. His trip was supported by a feasibility study grant from the Northwest Minnesota Foundation.

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